



# Montgomery County, Virginia

## RESIDENTIAL (R-3)

**R-3 District:** A residential district intended to accommodate moderate density, suburban residential uses and a limited number of commercial and institutional uses. To qualify for R-3 zoning, the parcel must consist of a minimum of two (2) acres and be mapped as Residential Transition, Village, Village Expansion, Urban Expansion, or Urban Development Area in the Montgomery County Comprehensive Plan.

**Single-Family Dwelling:** A structure that is arranged or designed to be occupied by one (1) family and includes either stick-built or modular houses. Manufactured structures (mobile homes/trailers) are not included.

**Two-Family Dwelling:** A structure having only two (2) dwelling units arranged or designed to be occupied by two (2) families. A duplex.

**Family:** By definition, a family consists of one (1) or more people occupying a premise and living in a single-dwelling unit, as distinguished from an unrelated group occupying a boardinghouse, tourist home, or hotel. A family can include one (1) or more persons related by blood, marriage, adoption or guardianship, including servants or care givers, and no more than two roomers or boarders. A family can also consist of up to four (4) unrelated people. Finally, a family can have up to eight (8) either mentally or develop-mentally disabled persons living in a residential group home facility.

### What can I do by right in an R-3 district? (Section 10-26 of the Montgomery County Code)

The R-3 districts are designed to stabilize and protect the essential character of neighborhoods and to promote and encourage suitable environments for family life. A limited number of commercial and institutional uses are permitted as long as their scale and character will not create concentrations of traffic, crowds of customers, general outdoor advertising, or other uses that would conflict with the residential character of the neighborhood.

There are uses that are designated as "by right" which means you do not have to apply for a special use permit. The uses do, however, have to comply with all approved plans and permits, development standards, and performance Standards included in the 1999 Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance and with all other applicable regulations. The "by right" uses include:

- Church
- Dwelling, Single-Family
- Dwelling, Two-Family
- Home Occupation
- Library
- Pet, Household
- Public Utility lines, (water, sewer. or other).
- School
- Temporary Healthcare Structure
- Telecommunications Tower, attached

Retail activity in R-3 districts is sharply curtailed and the area is protected against encroachment of either general commercial uses. The district is residential in character, while allowing specific compatible public and semi-public uses.

### What uses require a Special Use Permit?

Some uses are allowed in the R-3 district with the permission of the Board of Supervisors through the Special Use Permit process (applications available from the Planning Dept.). These include:

- Bed and Breakfast Homestay
- Boarding House
- Cemetery
- Civic Club
- Country Club
- Day Care Center
- Fire, Police, and Rescue Station
- Funeral Home
- Golf Course
- Home business
- Manufactured Home, Class A & B
- Medical Care Facility
- Nursing Home
- Park and Playground, Lighted and Unlighted
- Public Utility Plant (water, sewer- and other)
- Public Utility Substation
- Transition House

In addition, a Special Use Permit is required from the Board of Zoning Appeals or Board of Supervisors (See Section 10-26 of Montgomery County Code for clarification) for the following:

- Accessory Structures greater than 1,200 sq. ft in area and/or 18 ft in height.

## Building & Lot Requirements

Each zoning district has different lot and building requirements; which are meant to insure the compatibility of new development with the existing development in the surrounding area.

### Minimum Lot Area

In R-3 districts, lots must be a minimum of 10,000 square feet, have a minimum width of eighty (80) feet at the setback line of the front yard, and must have a maximum length/width ration of five to one (5:1) on lots less than two (2) acres. (A setback is the distance of a building, structure, or other defined object from the front lot line or other lot line as specified.)

### Lot Access:

All R-3 lots must be accessed from a road in the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) road system.

### Total Impervious Coverage:

The impervious surface (a surface that does not absorb water, such as concrete, asphalt, stone, or roofing materials) can not cover more than fifty percent (50%) of the lot.

### Maximum Building Coverage:

The buildings cannot cover more than thirty percent (30%) of the lot

### Minimum Yards:

- Front: twenty-five (25) feet
- Side: ten (10) feet
- Rear: twenty-five (25) feet (applicable to primary/principal structures)

### Accessory Buildings/Structures:

Accessory structures must be a minimum of ten (10) feet from side or rear lot lines.

### Maximum Building Height:

Buildings may not exceed thirty-five (35) feet in height from the grade, with two exceptions:

- The height limit for dwellings may be increased up to ten (10) feet, provided that there are two (2) side yards for each permitted use, each of which is fifteen (15) feet or more, plus one (1) foot or more of side yard for each additional foot of building height over thirty-five (35) feet.
- A public or semipublic building (school, library, church, hospital) may be erected to a height of sixty (60) feet from grade, provided that required front, side, and rear yards shall be increased one (1) foot or each foot in height over thirty-five (35) feet.
- All accessory buildings must be shorter than the main structure in height. In addition, accessory structures within ten (10) feet from the property line cannot be more than one (1) story in height. Any accessory structure over eighteen (18) feet in height requires a special use permit from the Board of Zoning Appeals. All accessory building must be less than the main height of the building.

Finally, all Residential (R-3) developments proposed after December 13, 1999 must be served by public water and sewer.

## Compact Development Option:

Under the compact development option, lots must be a minimum of 5,000 square feet (0.11 acres), provided that no less than twenty-five (25) percent of the gross area of the parent tract is preserved in permanent open space as defined by Montgomery County Code. The density under this option shall be no more than five (5) dwelling units per acre. The setbacks for R-3 Compact Development Option are a minimum of ten (10) feet and maximum of twenty-five (25) feet in front, a minimum of ten (10) feet and no maximum to the side, and a minimum of twenty-five (25) feet. Accessory buildings shall not be located less than ten (10) feet to the side or rear lot line.

New streets as part of the compact development option shall be public and designed and constructed in accordance with the minimum standards of the Virginia Department of Transportation (unless otherwise approved by Board of Supervisors), except that the surface pavement layer shall be asphalt concrete. Open space lots shall not be less than 5,000 square feet in size and may include active or passive recreational uses, and may be either publicly or privately held. ***See section 10-26 of the Montgomery County Code for additional details.***

**For additional information contact:  
Montgomery County Planning & GIS Services  
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Ph: 540-394-2148, Fax: 540-381-8897**

A zoning permit and/or site plan may be required to proceed with the uses listed on this data sheet. See section 10-53 of the Montgomery County Code, or call the Planning Department, to determine the required development approvals.

This sheet is intended to only be a guide for development regulations in this zoning district. Please see Chapter 10 of the Montgomery County Code for the specific regulations. The full texts of the zoning and subdivision ordinances are available at the Planning Department Webpage or at [www.municode.com](http://www.municode.com).